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Inland Transport Committee

Working Party on the Transport of Dangerous Goods

Joint Meeting of the RID Committee of Experts and the Working Party on the Transport of Dangerous Goods
Bern, 17–21 March 2014
Item 5 (a) of the provisional agenda
Proposals for amendments to RID/ADR/ADN:
Pending issues

Lithium batteries contained in vehicles and equipment assigned to UN Nos. 3166 and 3171

Transmitted by the Government of France[1,2]

Summary

Executive summary: The text of special provision 240 of the UN Model Regulations is found in RID/ADR in a Note to 2.2.9.1.7. In RID/ADR, UN Nos. 3166 and 3177 are fully exempted, unlike other modes. The status of the lithium batteries contained in such vehicles or equipment is thus not very clear in terms of the applicable test and design requirements, exemption from which was never contemplated.

Decision to be taken: Add a provision to the effect that lithium batteries contained in vehicles and equipment are not exempt from the tests under section 38.3 of the Manual of Tests and Criteria or from the construction requirements of the batteries themselves.

[1] In accordance with the programme of work of the Inland Transport Committee for 2012–2016 (ECE/TRANS/224, para. 94, ECE/TRANS/2012/12, programme activity 02.7 (A1c)).

[2] Circulated by the Intergovernmental Organisation for International Carriage by Rail (OTIF) under the symbol OTIF/RID/RC/2014/36.

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Introduction

1. The United Nations Sub-Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods has adopted a text for special provision 240 that is intended to draw a clear distinction between equipment and vehicles powered by lithium batteries consigned under UN Nos. 3091 and 3841, and those consigned under UN Nos. 3166 and 3171.

2. The latter two are subject to simplified transport conditions (notably in respect of packaging).

3. However, the Model Regulations and maritime and air transport regulations do not exempt the batteries themselves from construction requirements and prototype testing intended to ensure their intrinsic safety.

4. The fact that under RID/ADR, UN Nos. 3166 and 3171 are declared "not subject" to the Regulations could be seen to imply that the lithium batteries contained in such vehicles and equipment are also exempt from construction requirements and can be built following an untested design.

5. This is not the interpretation given by the competent authorities in France, however, and it is not desirable either from a security standpoint or as regards multimodal harmonization.

6. Moreover, if it were the case, these batteries could no longer be transported outside the equipment or vehicle they are designed to power.

7. In order to avoid incorrect interpretation of the text, the following amendments are proposed.

Proposal 1

Add the following text at the end of the last Note in 2.2.9.1.7:

"Lithium metal batteries and lithium ion batteries contained in vehicles or equipment consigned under UN Nos. 3166 or 3171 shall meet the same requirements as those established for UN Nos. 3091 and 3841 in this paragraph."

Proposal 2

In Table A of Chapter 3.2, for entries 3166 and 3171, after the words "NOT SUBJECT TO ADR/TO RID/TO ADN" add "except 2.2.9.1.7".

Justification

Clarification of the meaning of the text, and improved safety and intermodal harmonization.